



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland

You

Belong

Here



A Guide to Stand Up Awareness Week

November 6–10, 2023



Fáilte

Each year, more and more friends and allies come together to host Stand Up Awareness Week in schools, Youthreach centres and youth services across Ireland.

At Belong To, LGBTQ+ youth Ireland, we are so proud to see spaces across the country where LGBTQ+ young people feel protected and respected to be who they are. Thank you for making this happen!

This is the 14th year of Stand Up Awareness Week, Belong To's annual campaign in post-primary schools, Youthreach centres and youth services. From November 6-10, together we will shine a light on LGBTQ+ inclusion and safety and offer an opportunity to celebrate and recognise the LGBTQ+ community.

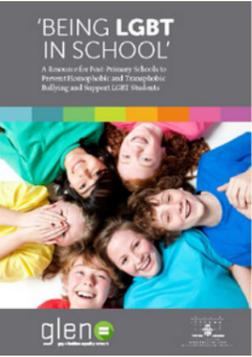
The focus of Stand Up Awareness Week is to decrease homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, and increase friendship and support of LGBTQ+ students by other students.

We are proud that the Department of Education has funded and supported Stand Up Awareness Week for many years. The new national action plan on bullying, *Cineáltas*, commits to the Department's continued support for Stand Up Awareness Week. The plan also recognises the importance of age-appropriate information on LGBTQ+ identities as a mechanism to prevent and address bullying, which we provide for you through our online education hub at www.belongto.org

Inside this guide, you will find information on how to set up Stand Up Awareness Week in your school, Youthreach centre or youth service, learn about LGBTQ+ language and terminology, and delve into a host of activity ideas for November.

This year, the theme of Stand Up Awareness Week is allyship! Everyone has a role to play in Stand Up Awareness Week, not just LGBTQ+ young people, and we want to celebrate the allies who are an invaluable part of creating spaces where LGBTQ+ people are safe and supported to be themselves. Learn more about allyship on pages 22-26.

Additional guidance and advice can be found in the resource *Being LGBT in School*, published by GLEN and the Department of Education and Skills. *Being LGBT in School* provides guidance for school staff in supporting LGBTQ+ students across a range of key areas. You can download the resource from our online education hub.



We are grateful to every school, youth service and Youthreach centre that joins Belong To for Stand Up Awareness Week and comes together to create a safer Ireland for LGBTQ+ young people.

Thank you to our Stand Up Awareness Week funders:



Stand Up Awareness Week is endorsed by:



Moninne Griffith

Moninne Griffith (she/her)
CEO, Belong To



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Stand Up Awareness Week



What Is Stand Up Awareness Week?

Stand Up Awareness Week is a national LGBTQ+ anti-bullying week running in second-level schools, Youthreach centres and youth services across Ireland each November. We are proud to now be in our 14th year of running Stand Up Awareness Week, and to have steadily increased the number of young people taking part year-on-year. Stand Up Awareness Week is a time to celebrate LGBTQ+ youth in all of their diversity and to come together in support for LGBTQ+ young people. The campaign also acknowledges the harms of anti-LGBTQ+ bullying, and makes clear to young people that this behaviour is both serious and unacceptable.

During Stand Up Awareness Week, LGBTQ+ young people and their allies learn about LGBTQ+ identities, take part in LGBTQ+ solidarity actions, and come together to create a safe and supportive environment for all young people.

Stand Up Awareness Week Objectives

When planning Stand Up Awareness Week in your school, Youthreach centre or youth service, it may be helpful to keep the campaign's key objectives in mind:

- Increasing friendship and support of LGBTQ+ students by other students.
- Increasing awareness of LGBTQ+ students among other students, teachers, principals and others in the school-wide community.
- Increasing respect for diversity and LGBTQ+ identities.
- Increasing the likelihood that LGBTQ+ students will report bullying.

When brainstorming and planning activities for Stand Up Awareness Week, it can be useful to think which of these objectives you can meet with each activity. For example, inviting students to co-create a solidarity mural or noticeboard could be an effective way of increasing friendship and support of LGBTQ+ students by other students. Having a class discussion on the harmful effects of LGBTQ+phobic bullying and emphasising your school or service's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to bullying could help increase the likelihood of LGBTQ+ students reporting this behaviour.

Consider communicating these objectives to all staff and young people at the beginning of Stand Up Awareness Week, and throughout, so that everyone is clear on what you are trying to achieve. Sharing anonymous surveys before and after Stand Up Awareness Week is a helpful way to see if you have achieved these objectives. **Check out our online education hub** for sample surveys you can adapt and use in your setting.



Why We Need To Create LGBTQ+ Inclusive Spaces

In the 20 years since Belong To first opened our doors, we have seen huge changes for LGBTQ+ people in Ireland. When we were first established as a youth service in 2003, it was only ten years since the decriminalisation of homosexuality, and just three years after new equality laws were introduced to protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination in their workplaces and communities.

For many of us, the wonderful Marriage Equality referendum of 2015 doesn't feel too long ago. With this perspective, the steady rise in anti-LGBTQ+ hate, discrimination and violence we have seen across the globe in recent years feels shocking.

Sadly, for LGBTQ+ young people today, open homophobia, biphobia and transphobia have become the norm in their online worlds. As part of our *School Climate Survey*, Belong To asked LGBTQ+ students about their experiences with online anti-LGBTQ+ content.¹ A shocking 87% of LGBTQ+ students had seen or experienced anti-LGBTQ+ hate and harassment online.

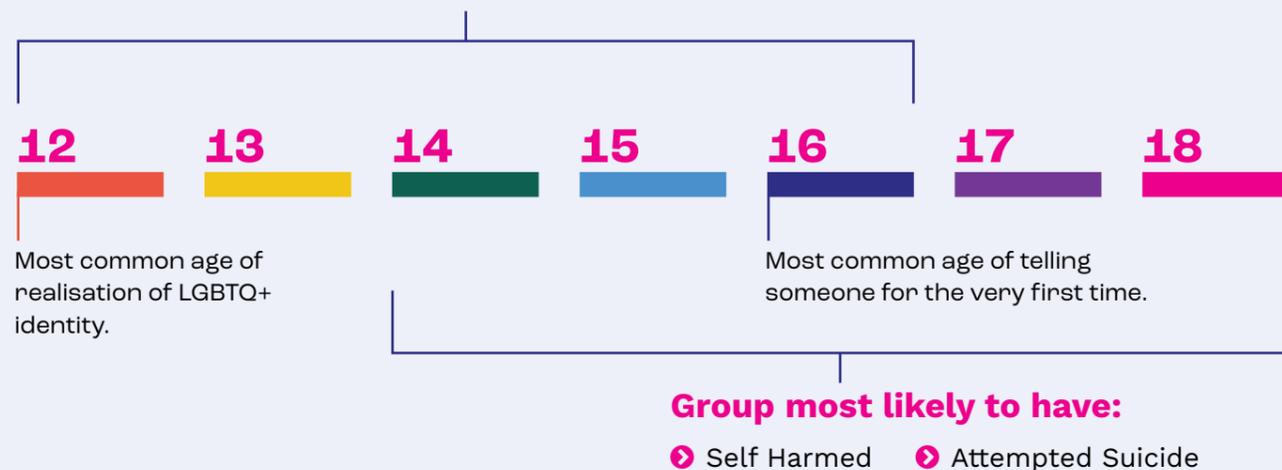
We have steadily seen this online hate translate to real-world violence, in Ireland and further afield. This year, An Garda Síochána reported a 29% increase in recorded hate crimes and hate-related incidents. Targeting on the basis of sexual orientation was the second-highest recorded form of violence.

Coming Out As LGBTQ+

Research shows that the most common age for someone to realise they are LGBTQ+ is 12 years old.² For today's First Year students, this climate of fear is far more familiar to them than the warmth, acceptance and joy that we felt as a country following Marriage Equality.

LGBTQ+ Young People's Mental Health²

Experiences of homophobic and transphobic bullying, isolation, fear and embarrassment.



Being LGBTQ+ can be challenging; particularly when someone has not told others about their sexual orientation or gender identity. For LGBTQ+ young people, discovering and beginning to accept their identity is often associated with a sense of isolation, fear of rejection, and confusion.³ Many LGBTQ+ young people do not feel safe to come out, or to share their sexual orientation or gender identity with people in their life. By making your school, Youthreach centre or youth service LGBTQ+ inclusive, LGBTQ+ young people can take refuge from stress and anxiety in a safe and supportive space.

LGBTQ+ Students' School Experiences

Last year, we spoke to 1,208 LGBTQ+ second-level students living in Ireland as part of our *School Climate Survey* with Columbia University.⁴ Our research shows that, in the 2021-2022 school year, a shocking 76% of LGBTQ+ students felt unsafe at school. 69% of LGBTQ+ students reported hearing other students making homophobic remarks, and a concerning 58% of LGBTQ+ post-primary students reported hearing a homophobic remark from a teacher or school staff member.

Among Second-Level LGBTQ+ Students In Ireland:



76%
feel unsafe at school.



86%
have been deliberately excluded by peers.



69%
heard other students make homophobic remarks.



3 in 10
missed at least one school day in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.



1 in 10
are unsure of whether they will complete the Leaving Certificate.



58%
heard a school staff member make a homophobic remark.⁵

Sadly, many young people experience bullying at some point in their school lives. However, research shows that LGBTQ+ young people are far more likely to experience school bullying than their non-LGBTQ+ peers.

Compared to the general Irish youth population, LGBTQ+ students are:

x4

times more likely to feel lonely at school.

x3

times more likely to feel like an outsider at school.

x3

times more likely to feel disliked by other students.

x2

times more likely to have difficulties making friends at school.⁶

It is vitally important for education and youth services to create an environment where all young people can be themselves and feel welcome, celebrated, safe and supported. For some LGBTQ+ young people, this may be their only safe space to relax, feel comfortable in their identity, and be their true selves.

The Impact Of LGBTQ+ Inclusion

Although LGBTQ+ youth face many challenges, there are a number of actions that individual staff members, and their school, Youthreach centre or youth service can take to support LGBTQ+ young people.

Supportive Staff

In our 2022 *School Climate Survey*, we were delighted to see that half of LGBTQ+ students could identify ten or more school staff members supportive of LGBTQ+ identities. Additionally, 99% of LGBTQ+ students in Ireland could identify at least one school staff member supportive of LGBTQ+ students. Our findings show that LGBTQ+ students who enjoy a higher level of staff support for LGBTQ+ identities are:

- More likely to feel accepted by the student body.
- More likely to feel like they belong in school.
- Less likely to miss school days because of school safety.

Stand Up Awareness Week is a great opportunity for all staff in your school, Youthreach centre or youth service to be visible in their support for the LGBTQ+ community. Having staff participate in Stand Up Awareness Week events, displaying a small Pride flag in their classroom, or a putting a rainbow sticker on a laptop or tablet can be subtle yet meaningful ways of demonstrating their support.

Inclusive Curriculum

The 2022 *School Climate Survey* found that half of LGBTQ+ students were not taught anything about LGBTQ+ topics in the 2021-2022 school year, and only 35% had received LGBTQ+-inclusive SPHE. However, LGBTQ+ students who had been taught LGBTQ+ topics felt more accepted in their school, and were less likely to miss school days due to feeling unsafe.

Stand Up Awareness Week is a great opportunity to encourage your colleagues to prepare a dedicated lesson on LGBTQ+ topics. **Check out our online education hub** for guidance on how to integrate this into a lesson across 14 Junior Cycle subjects, from Business Studies to Geography and Music.



Staff Interventions

Research shows that identity-based bullying, including bullying associated with someone's LGBTQ+ identity, is particularly harmful to their wellbeing.⁷ Intervening when LGBTQ+phobic language or remarks are used is one very important way for staff to create an inclusive and safe environment for LGBTQ+ young people.

Our *School Climate Survey* research found that 69% of LGBTQ+ students had heard homophobic remarks from other students. However, when school staff proactively intervened when overhearing homophobic remarks, LGBTQ+ students were:

- More likely to feel accepted by the student body.
- More likely to feel like they belong in school.
- Less likely to miss school days because of school safety.



Tackling LGBTQ+phobic language was the theme for Stand Up Awareness Week 2022. **Check out the resources on our online education hub** to see how you can support your colleagues to agree a common process for responding to, recording and reporting LGBTQ+phobic language. As part of your preparations for Stand Up Awareness Week, why not encourage your colleagues to complete our free e-learning training module 'Creating LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools and Youth Services'. Upon completion, staff could display their certificates on their classroom doors as another way to show their commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion!



Remember!

Representation in the curriculum is important for all young people, including LGBTQ+ young people, young people with disabilities, young people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and Traveller young people. Think about how you can maintain this representation throughout the whole school year, not just during Stand Up Awareness Week.



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A Step-by-Step Guide



Getting Started

Hosting Stand Up Awareness Week in your school, Youthreach centre or youth service is the first step towards creating a safe and inclusive space that acts as a protective factor for LGBTQ+ young people.

Recent research on LGBTQ+ youth in Ireland and across Europe identified five emerging themes on improving school for LGBTQ+ students:

- The creation of safe spaces or support groups which include allies, and addressing bullying.
- Affirming LGBTQ+ identities.
- Formal education on LGBTQ+ themes in class.
- Promoting inclusion, diversity and equality.
- Training for teachers.⁸

Seven Steps to Stand Up: Our ‘Seven Steps to Stand Up’, outlined on pages 11-16 provide best-practice guidelines designed to support you in coordinating and running Stand Up Awareness Week. You can download additional resources and ideas from our website, www.belongto.org/standup.

Stand Up Awareness Week should be run in partnership with young people. Involving and engaging young people during the process of devising, planning and reflecting on Stand Up Awareness Week is just as important as implementing the week. Positive engagement from young people will help to create a safe and inclusive space before the official week has even begun.

Online Education Hub: This year, rather than one toolkit document, we are hosting our support materials on an **online education hub** on our newly-revamped website. These resources will provide ideas and activities to support you in designing and rolling out Stand Up Awareness Week. Whenever you see this icon , you will find additional related resources on the **online education hub**. You can access the education hub on our website www.belongto.org/standup.

2023 Theme ‘Allyship’: For Stand Up Awareness Week 2023, we are encouraging you to promote the importance of allyship. It is important that allies are visible and vocally stand up for the rights of others, call out bias and unacceptable behaviour, and use their voice to effect change. You can read more about this on pages 22-26.

Meet The Education And Training Team

Our Education and Training Team are here to provide guidance to ensure you feel equipped to run Stand Up Awareness Week in your school, Youthreach centre or youth service. Sharon (she/her), Stephen (he/him), Emma (she/her) and Robert (he/him) are available to chat if you have any questions or if you would like to discuss ideas or work through challenges.



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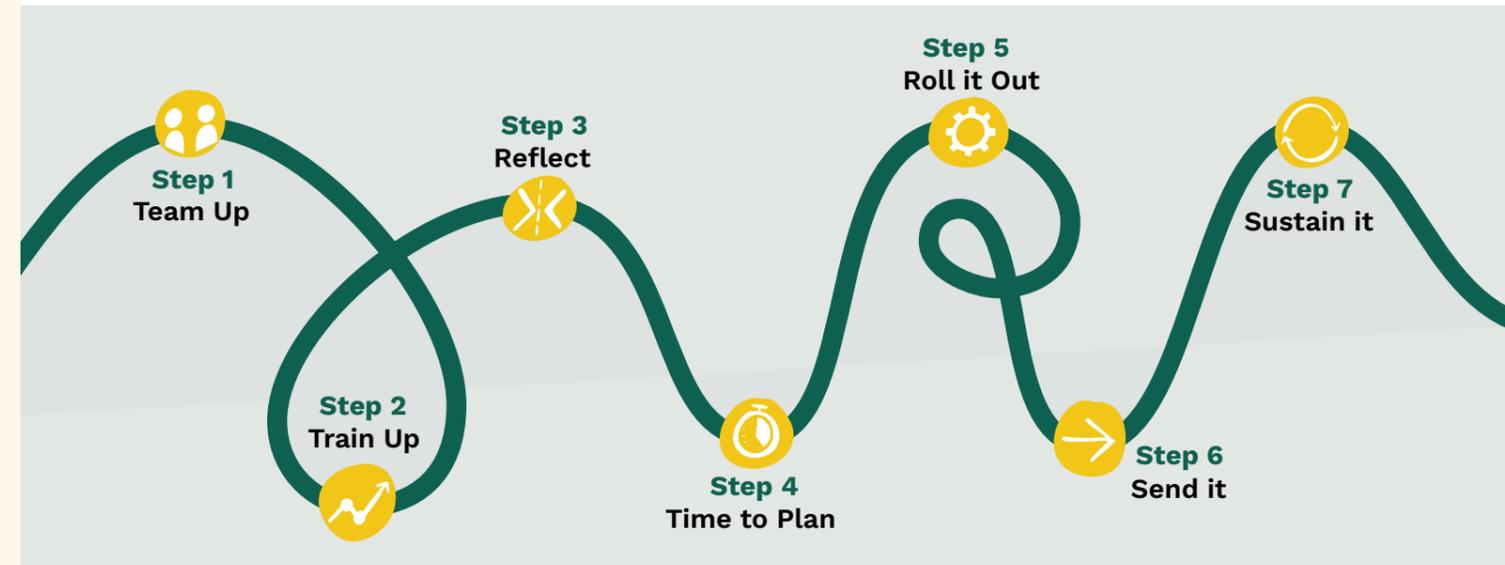
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Seven Steps To Stand Up

Although Stand Up Awareness Week is just one week in the school calendar, a lot of preparation and planning happens in advance of this week. Below are seven steps you can take to run a successful week in your school, Youthreach centre or youth service.



Step 1: Team Up

Bring like-minded staff and students together to create your Stand Up Awareness Week team. Involve your Senior Management Team, as they can offer great support and advice as you consider various Stand Up Awareness Week ideas and activities. Encourage other staff to get involved through their roles or subjects and invite young people to lead this with you in your school, Youthreach centre or youth service. A youth-led approach will empower the young people in your organisation to effect positive change in their own community.

The theme for Stand Up Awareness Week 2023 is allyship, so think about how you can include and empower allies to take part in your preparations. You might like to elect a coordinator on your staff, who will lead the week and be the main point of contact for young people, staff, parents and local youth groups getting involved with Stand Up Awareness Week. Remember the Education and Training Team at Belong To are always here to support you. Know that we are part of your team and don't hesitate to get in touch!

Step 2: Train Up

E-Learning Module: Creating LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools and Youth Services

A great way to get started is to register for our free 90-minute e-learning module. This is designed for educators and youth workers. This will give you a strong foundation in the LGBTQ+ basics and an understanding of the experiences of LGBTQ+ young people in school. This interactive training includes videos, exercises and quizzes to equip you in effectively listening to, understanding, responding to, and supporting LGBTQ+ young people. Sign up to our free e-learning module which will give you a foundation in the following:

- Terminology and Language
- LGBTQ+ Mental Health
- Managing Our Own Attitude and Bias
- Gender and Young People: Nonbinary and Transgender Identities
- Coming Out
- Improving Your Practice

This free 90-minute e-learning module is available from training.belongto.org.

Stand Up Awareness Week Training – September 2023

Register for our online or in-person Stand Up Awareness Week training this September. Belong To offers specific training on how to plan and roll out Stand Up Awareness Week. We will take you through the steps to run Stand Up Awareness Week in detail and provide you with guidance and activity ideas. We offer both virtual and in-person training sessions across the country. A €10 charge will apply to all online and in-person training sessions. This small fee is to support our work with LGBTQ+ youth across Ireland.

To book your place, visit www.belongto.org/standup, email standup@belongto.org, or call 01 670 6223.

Step 3: Reflect

Set up a time and space for your team to meet, so that you can begin to discuss and reflect on how LGBTQ+ inclusive your organisation is. This could happen over one or several meetings, depending on the time you have available. Take this time to think about the allies in your setting. Youth voice is so important in this step, as is engaging with allies – you might choose to survey young people in your school and review the results.



1. The Stand Up Awareness Week **online education hub** will give you guidance and ideas on how to approach discussing LGBTQ+ topics within your school, Youthreach centre or youth service. Start by talking to the team about respectful communications. This will help to create a safe space for all involved.
2. Explain what Stand Up Awareness Week is to everyone at the meeting and why it is important.
3. Talk through the terminology and language poster to make sure everyone understands what the various terms mean. You don't have to be an expert – the poster is there to help everyone become familiar with LGBTQ+ language.
4. Bring your team through the theme for this year's Stand Up Awareness Week, 'allyship', which you can read more about on pages 22-26. Invite feedback and keep notes as you go.
5. Based on the outcomes of your planning meetings, which will be unique to you and your school, Youthreach centre or youth service, brainstorm potential action and activity ideas. Keep referring back to the outcomes – by the end of Stand Up Awareness Week, what will be different? You can use some of the suggested ideas or design your own. Draw inspiration from other schools by looking at the activity ideas and gallery in this guide from pages 29-33.



Step 4: Time to Plan

Once you have considered some potential actions and ideas, it is time to get planning! Think about the what, how, who, where and when. You might have some great ideas, but you have to be realistic and consider:



This is your Stand Up Awareness Week, so it's important you consider what will work best for you, the young people, and the staff within your organisation.

If this is the first time you are organising Stand Up Awareness Week, you may choose to focus on one area or activity and build from there in future years. If you are more experienced, you might create your own activities and events. You can structure your Stand Up Awareness Week in a way that suits you.

For example, you might decide to plan:

- ▶ One LGBTQ+ action per day or the same action by different groups each day.
- ▶ Presentations to different groups followed by a whole school, Youthreach centre or youth service action.
- ▶ In-class actions or lunchtime actions.

Research has highlighted the potential cumulative positive impact of repeated events like Stand Up Awareness Week,⁹ so there is value in taking your time and ensuring your actions have a strong and clear impact, rather than trying to do too much at once. Think quality over quantity. Discuss your plans with Senior Management as they might have some ideas or resources to help you. Perhaps some of the young people in your school or youth group could present their plans at a staff meeting and invite staff to support them. This is a great way to spread the word and encourage involvement.

Step 5: Roll It Out

After all the planning, it's time to roll out Stand Up Awareness Week from November 6-10 or at another time that suits your team! This is a time to bring together your school's LGBTQ+ and allies club, if you have one, and other allies to spread the word and engage as many people in your community as possible. Photograph and video your events and consider engaging your local media - check out the media guide on our **online education hub**.

Keep in regular contact with your team members during the week to make sure everything is going to plan. At the end of the week, make sure to have a post-Stand Up Awareness Week meeting. Use this meeting space to recognise and celebrate what you have achieved. Invite the team to share their learnings and note recommendations for future years.



Step 6: Send It

Now that all the hard work is complete, congratulate yourself on a successful Stand Up Awareness Week!



We would love to hear from you about how it went and see your photographs and videos. Upon completing the online Send It evaluation form, your organisation will receive a Stand Up Awareness Week certificate and a small token to recognise your hard work. The Send It form will ask for details of the actions you carried out, as well as any photos or other media you captured during the week.

Visit www.belongto.org/sendit to fill in an evaluation form and upload your pictures and videos.





Step 7: Sustain It

Stand Up Awareness Week runs for a single week each year. To create a truly inclusive environment and support LGBTQ+ young people, we need to think about how we can ensure that a focus on safety continues beyond this week and throughout the year. Here are some suggestions:

Join The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark

The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark is an 18-month initiative for post-primary schools. Belong To launched this initiative in 2022, and since then, 57 schools across the country have embarked on a journey to become an accredited LGBTQ+ safe and supportive school. The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark is a whole-school approach which focuses on the four key areas of Wellbeing Promotion from an LGBTQ+ perspective. These areas include creating an LGBTQ+ inclusive culture and environment, resourcing an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum, nurturing LGBTQ+ inclusive relationships and partnerships, and supporting LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and planning. Once your school has demonstrated best practice across these key action areas, you can become a recognised LGBTQ+ safe and supportive school.

Start your LGBTQ+ Quality Mark journey today!
Visit www.belongto.org/lgbq-quality-mark

Create An LGBTQ+ And Allies Club

Some members of your Stand Up Awareness Week team may want to continue meeting up year-round. We can support you in setting up an LGBTQ+ and Allies Club or what's sometimes known as a Gender and Sexualities Alliance (GSA). GSAs foster connections between LGBTQ+ and allied young people and builds community. A GSA brings young people together to have fun, connect, receive support and campaign to make changes about issues important to them. Learn more about setting up a GSA or LGBTQ+ and Allies Club on pages 31-32 in this guide.

Continued Intervention By Staff

Stand Up Awareness Week gives schools, Youthreach centres and youth services the opportunity to really consider whether the anti-bullying policies, procedures, and Code of Behaviour are being followed. A major protective factor for LGBTQ+ young people is observing clear and consistent proactive intervention when any form of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying is observed.¹⁰ All staff should be clear on how to intervene and document any breaches of these policies. This should continue after Stand Up Awareness Week.

Year-Round Representation

Continue to represent LGBTQ+ families, identities and relationships throughout your school, Youthreach or youth service in policies, the curriculum and the environment. Check out the poster and image bank available on our **online education hub**.





03

LGBTQ+ Language And Terminology



LGBTQ+ Terminology And Language

Understanding LGBTQ+ language and terminology is an important step in supporting LGBTQ+ young people.

LGBTQ+ terminology might be new to you, and may feel a little overwhelming. The most important thing to remember is that you don't need to know it all. Most people want to use LGBTQ+ inclusive language, but they are not sure where to begin. By learning some of the key concepts and understanding what the letters in LGBTQ+ stand for, you can feel more confident in discussing LGBTQ+ topics with young people.

Terms change over time and some people prefer certain words to others. The terms here are relevant and accurate at the moment. Their meaning and definition will gradually change, and new terms will be introduced.



If a term comes up that you aren't familiar with, it's ok to ask what this means or to ask an individual what term they prefer to use. Remember that it is not the responsibility of the LGBTQ+ student in your class to educate others on LGBTQ+ topics and terminology. You can find more information and resources about using LGBTQ+ inclusive language in your school or youth service at our **online education hub**.

Everyday Language

Using more inclusive language every day is a great way to show that you are supportive and inclusive of LGBTQ+ people. Often, our default is to use gendered language, or to assume that everyone in the room is straight (heterosexual). There are lots of ways to use more inclusive language in your classroom and youth service. Consider the following word replacements:

~~“How are you this morning, girls/lads?”~~

“How is everyone this morning?”

~~“How many brothers and sisters do you have?”~~

“How many siblings do you have?”

~~“In pairs with the girl/boy beside you...”~~

“Partner up with the person sitting beside you...”

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word used when we are talking about someone without using their name. For example, instead of saying 'Sarah is running late because Sarah needed to go back to Sarah's locker', you might say 'Sarah is running late because she needed to go back to her locker'.

The pronouns that someone uses are often connected to how they understand their gender. Common pronouns include they/them, she/her, and he/him. If you don't know what pronouns someone uses, it's best to use the gender-neutral pronouns they/them/theirs until you have a chance to find out. If you are not sure of someone's pronouns, it's best to ask rather than making an assumption.

By using your own pronouns in your email signature, Teams/Zoom account, on forms, and anywhere else you see an opportunity, you are sending a clear message to young people and your colleagues that you understand the importance of pronouns and are an ally.



LGBTQ+ Terminology

LGB

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual About Sexual Orientation

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Sexual Orientation | Our sexual and romantic attraction to other people. |
| Lesbian | A woman who is attracted to other women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term. |
| Gay | Someone who is attracted to people of the same gender. |
| Bisexual | Someone who is attracted to more than one gender e.g. <i>both men and women</i> . |

Related Terms

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Pansexual | Someone whose romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by sex assignment, gender identity, or gender expression. |
| Asexual (Ace) | Someone who experiences limited or no sexual attraction. |

T

Trans About Gender Identity

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Gender Identity | Our personal sense of our own gender. |
| Transgender or Trans | A term describing a person's gender identity that does not match their assigned sex at birth. This word is also used as an umbrella term to describe some groups of people who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression. |

Related Terms

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Sex assigned at birth | The designation of a person at birth as male or female based on their anatomy (genitalia and/or reproductive organs) or biology (chromosomes and/or hormones). |
| Non-Binary | People whose gender identity is neither exclusively woman or man or is in between or beyond the gender binary. |
| Pronouns | The words used to refer to a person other than their name, e.g. he/she/they. |
| Cisgender | Someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. |
| Gender Expression | How we show our gender through our clothes, hair etc. This is different to gender identity. Gender identity refers to how we feel inside, and gender expression is how we present ourselves outside. |

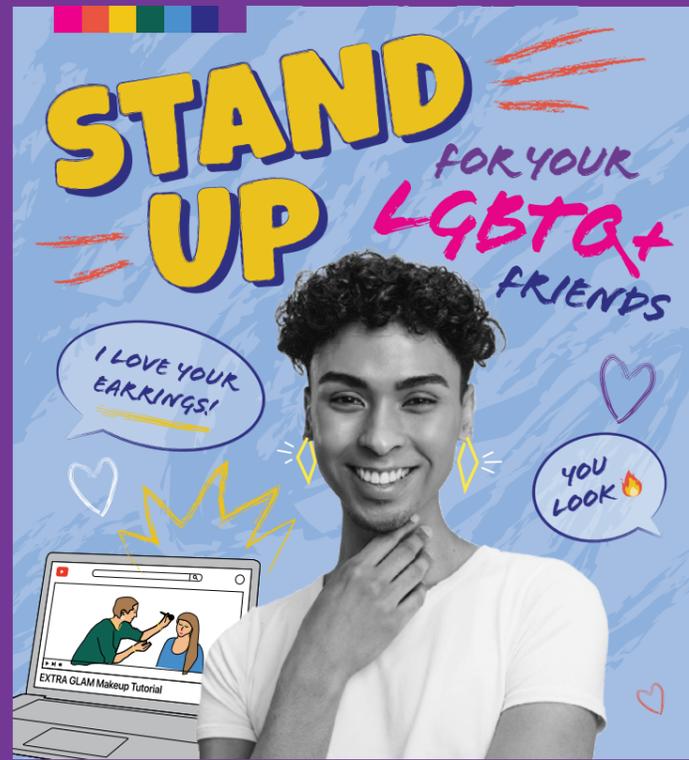
Q

Queer

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Queer | An umbrella term used to describe people who are not heterosexual and/or cisgender. Queer was used as a slur against the LGBTQ+ community for many years and still can be. However, the word has been reclaimed by LGBTQ+ communities and many now embrace the term. Check if someone is comfortable with this term before referring to them as queer. |
|--------------|--|

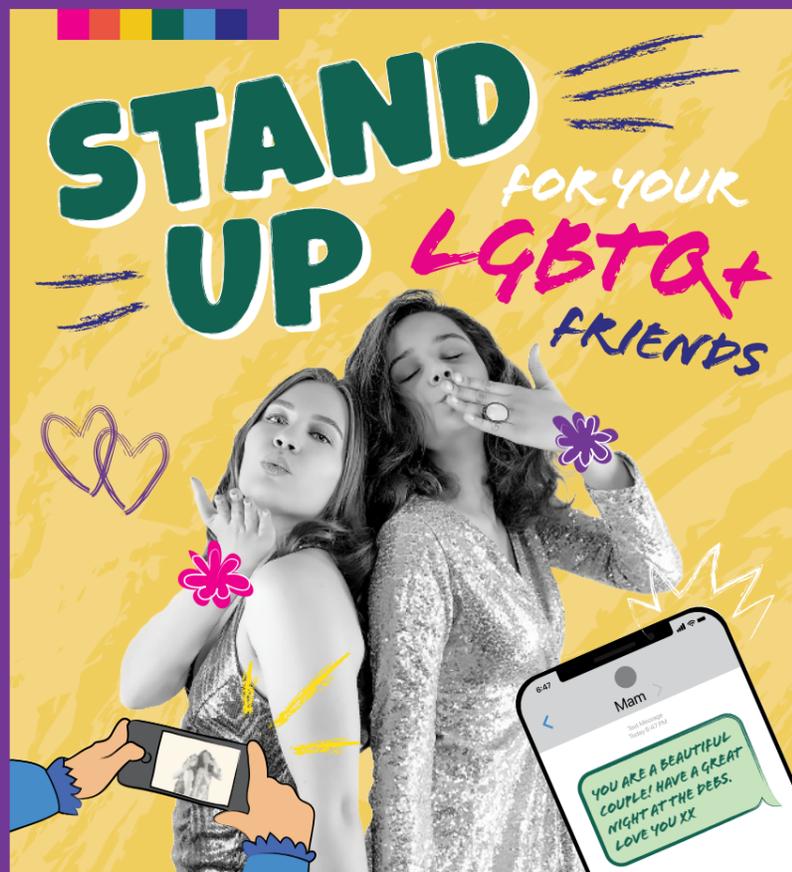
+

| | |
|----------|--|
| + | The 'plus' is used to signify all of the gender identities and sexual orientations that are not specifically covered by the other five initials. |
|----------|--|



04

Allyship – Stand Up Awareness Week Theme



This year for Stand Up Awareness Week, we are focusing on the theme of allyship. This theme connects to one of our collective objectives: Increasing friendship and support of LGBTQ+ students by other students.

Everyone has a role to play in Stand Up Awareness Week, not just LGBTQ+ young people. We want to celebrate the allies who are an invaluable part of creating spaces where LGBTQ+ people are safe and supported to be themselves.

What Is An Ally?

An ally can be defined as “a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate with and for, the oppressed population.”¹¹

LGBTQ+ allies play an active role in supporting LGBTQ+ people who are facing discrimination or exclusion because of who they are, despite not identifying as members of the LGBTQ+ community themselves.

Why Are Allies Important?

Young people often depend on their peers for social support.¹² Research shows that LGBTQ+ young people who have friendships with allies have less internalised stigma about their identity.¹³ As LGBTQ+ youth may have more difficulty accessing support from family members, support from their peers may be even more important to them.¹⁴ There may not be many, if any, other openly LGBTQ+ young people in their school, youth service or local community, so it may be challenging for them without the friendship and support of allies.

As well as their importance at an individual level, allies are a crucial part of any movement that is seeking to secure rights or protections for a minority group. When there are more people who do not identify as members of a group, we need to build support from outside of it.

Think of the Black Lives Matters protests against racism in 2020. Thousands of people in Ireland participated in marches across the country, and most of them were not from a minority ethnic background. However, they felt compelled to take action to show their support for communities who are impacted by racism.

Ireland already has great examples of LGBTQ+ allyship, most notably during the Marriage Equality referendum in 2015. If it had only been LGBTQ+ people who voted in favour of LGBTQ+ marriage equality, the result of the referendum would not have been a resounding yes! However, thanks to the support of LGBTQ+ allies, the referendum passed, with the final result showing 62% of voters had supported the motion.

What Do Allies Do?

The answer is in the question – allies act! Allies are not just people who are tolerant of LGBTQ+ people, or don't discriminate against them. Instead, they take action to show solidarity, challenge prejudice, and make the world fairer and more equal.

While the word ally is of course a noun, some people like to think of being an ally as a verb, to emphasise that taking action is a fundamental component of the role.

The types of actions that LGBTQ+ allies take can vary. Providing a supportive ear to someone in distress, intervening when overhearing a homophobic remark, or attending a Pride protest march are all examples of allyship.

Within a school community, Youthreach centre or youth service, allies in different roles have the power to carry out different actions. For example, an ally teacher or youth worker might be able to show solidarity by delivering a lesson that is LGBTQ+ inclusive, while a youth ally could make an impact by sticking up for an LGBTQ+ young person who is having a hard time.

What Motivates Someone To Become An Ally?

There are a number of factors that can affect a young person's decision to act as an ally. Research shows that personal relationships with LGBTQ+ people help develop empathy and commitment to an equal society.¹⁵ Other factors include developing critical thinking and self-reflection, and having the opportunity for informal discussions on LGBTQ+ topics with peers.¹⁶

Crucially, allies need to be given the opportunity to take part in concrete actions – to be asked for help and given meaningful ways to get involved.¹⁷

What Are The Barriers To Becoming An Ally?

Actively working to tackle discrimination against LGBTQ+ people can be challenging, especially for young people. You can't tell that someone is LGBTQ+ just by looking at them. It is also not obvious in any group which people identify as LGBTQ+ and which are there as allies. This can lead some young people to worry that by acting as an ally, they may be perceived to be LGBTQ+ themselves, and experience some of the same stigma or discrimination as their LGBTQ+ peers.¹⁸ Research found that straight allies found it challenging to be asked to intervene with LGBTQ+phobic language, due to the risk of them being harassed as a result.¹⁹

For this reason, young allies in education settings or youth services need strong support from staff to reduce these worries. By creating a climate of zero-tolerance to any type of bullying or harassment, you can help give allies the confidence to take action to support their LGBTQ+ peers.

How To Become An LGBTQ+ Ally

So we know that being an ally is an action – but what is involved in becoming an ally to the LGBTQ+ community? There are four levels of development that people go through in becoming allies.²⁰

Awareness

The first step is becoming aware of who you are and the ways in which you are similar to and different from LGBTQ+ people. As an educator, you could achieve this through class discussions, conversations with LGBTQ+ people, and reflecting on your own identities and experiences.

Knowledge

The next step as an ally is educating others about LGBTQ+ people and the topics that affect them as a community. This could include exploring laws and policies that affect LGBTQ+ people both in Ireland and elsewhere.

Skills

Helping young people develop the skills they need to act as an ally can be challenging but is very important. Think about the kinds of actions your allies might be taking – intervening with homophobic language, or helping out with an awareness campaign. What kind of skills will they need to do this effectively?

Action

This is the final and most important step. Young people putting their learnings into practice and taking action to support their LGBTQ+ peers will have a transformative impact on our schools, youth services and society! Allies need to have meaningful work to take part in, and they have to be invited to participate.

Class discussions should always be framed with respect as a grounding principle. No individual or group's rights – whether they are LGBTQ+ or otherwise – should be up for 'debate'. Everyone is entitled to a personal belief and viewpoint, but in a school or youth service setting everyone should be treated with respect.

Allyship Actions



Education

Facilitate reflections with the young people in your setting on their own identities, and the role they can play in creating a more equal society.



Stand Up Awareness Week

Stand Up Awareness Week is a brilliant opportunity to give the allies in your setting meaningful ways to take action. Encourage students who are both LGBTQ+ and allies to get involved in preparations for your Stand Up Awareness Week.



Connect With The LGBTQ+ Community

You could invite a speaker from the LGBTQ+ community to your school, Youthreach or youth service for a talk during Stand Up Awareness Week. If you can't get a speaker in-person, you could use YouTube videos or podcasts to hear from LGBTQ+ people themselves about their experiences, and how they think allies can get involved.



Set Up An LGBTQ+ And Allies Group

These groups are a powerful way to create a safe space for LGBTQ+ young people and their allies to form friendships and discuss issues that are important to them. They are a great way for allies to develop the awareness, knowledge and skills that they need to take meaningful actions to support the LGBTQ+ community.



**“Awareness is good,
but action is better.”²¹**





05

Activities And Actions



Timetable Of Events

In your Stand Up Awareness Week planning group, create your very own timetable of events. We've come up with some ideas for you!

Monday, November 6th

Kick off Stand Up Awareness Week with an announcement for the whole school about what it is all about. Invite some young people to talk about the 2023 theme of allyship. If you have a flagpole, you could arrange a raising of the Progress Pride flag as an opening ceremony.

Tuesday, November 7th

It's time to get visible! How can you create an environment that is clearly LGBTQ+ inclusive? Get creative and decorate prominent noticeboards to create a welcoming and diverse school environment.

Wednesday, November 8th

Bring in a guest speaker to talk about LGBTQ+ topics and the importance of allyship, or show videos in class on the topic. Invite staff and young people who identify as allies to participate.

Thursday, November 9th

Whisk up some delicious treats and host a rainbow bake sale! Belong To is a charity offering life-saving support services to LGBTQ+ youth across Ireland. Consider donating the funds raised to this great cause.

Friday, November 10th

Create a rainbow flag! Encourage everyone to wear a jumper making up the colours of the rainbow flag: red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple for Belong To's Rainbow Jumper Day. Don't forget to take some photos and share them as part of our #SendIt campaign!



Gallery Of Ideas

Draw inspiration for activity ideas from previous Stand Up Awareness Week participants!



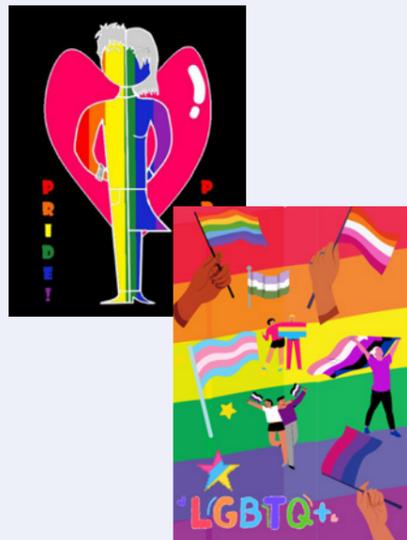
LGBTQ+ noticeboard with QR code for information and helplines at Mount St. Michael, Cork.



Students spelling out the LGBTQ+ acronym at St. David's CBS, Dublin.



Rainbow bake sale at Scariff Community College, Clare.



Stand Up Awareness Week posters created during coding class at St. Mark's Community College, Tallaght.



LGBTQ+-themed make up and non-uniform day at Deansrath Community College, Dublin.



Friendship-themed rainbow art collages at Banagher College, Offaly.



Rainbow Jumper Day at St Oliver Post Primary, Meath.



'Safe place' rainbow stickers for LGBTQ+ student allies at Coláiste Choilm, Cork.



Students raising the Pride flag at De La Salle College, Louth.

Activity Focus: Setting Up an LGBTQ+ and Allies Club

Setting Up An LGBTQ+ And Allies Club

The young people that supported you in organising Stand Up Awareness Week might be interested in continuing their LGBTQ+ advocacy. LGBTQ+ and Allies Clubs bring young people together to have fun, connect, receive support and campaign to make positive changes about issues important to them.

LGBTQ+ and Allies Clubs can be a powerful tool for providing safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students and their allies, and each school's LGBTQ+ and Allies Club is likely to be unique.

How To Set Up Your LGBTQ+ And Allies Club

Nominate an Advisor or an Advisory Group: Each LGBTQ+ and Allies Club should have a member of staff acting as Advisor for the group. The Advisor will help facilitate the starting up and maintenance of the Club, supporting the members where necessary to keep things running smoothly. The member of staff can rotate weekly, biweekly or monthly.

Spread the word: The best way to get the word out is to let other staff and students know about the Club so you can welcome your first members. This can be done through assemblies, form meetings or posters around the school. Also creating a unique name for the Club is a fun and exciting way to get the members working together.

Prepare for meetings: Set an agenda and publicise your meeting. Think about the best way to reach young people (flyers, classroom announcements, social media). Check out our **online hub** for tips on how to host a successful meeting.



Learn more about setting up a LGBTQ+ and Allies Club in our **online education hub!**

Who To Include In Your LGBTQ+ And Allies Club?

The short answer is everyone who is open to creating a safe and supportive space for LGBTQ+ students. It is important to make the staff and students aware that allies are welcome as they are an important part of creating a supportive environment. By including both LGBTQ+ students and allies, young people who are not yet 'out' as LGBTQ+ can take part without feeling pressure to tell others that they are members of the LGBTQ+ community.

When And Where To Run Your LGBTQ+ And Allies Club?

As every LGBTQ+ and Allies Club is unique, it is about finding the best time for you. This may be during lunch once a week or after school. The Club should take place in a space that feels comfortable and accessible for all. You may like to design the room with some posters or positive imagery relating to LGBTQ+ people or topics.

Activities Within Your LGBTQ+ And Allies Club

Some of the most important activities and roles that your LGBTQ+ and Allies Club may play are listed below:

Support: LGBTQ+ and Allies Clubs provide a safe space for students who are facing challenges with their identity, or are facing bullying and harassment because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. A way to begin each meeting to help everyone feel supported and safe is to share your name, pronouns and how everyone is feeling.

Social: LGBTQ+ and Allies Clubs help students who are LGBTQ+ or questioning form social connections and community with each other in a safe, accepting space. These Clubs help to reduce the sense of isolation that LGBTQ+ youth can sometimes feel. With each meeting you can create a space to brainstorm ideas for projects to undertake or activities to partake in.

Activism: LGBTQ+ and Allies Clubs can allow students to get together to take action to improve their school and community for LGBTQ+ students. They may focus on educating teachers, parents and students; engaging with school policies and procedures; and getting involved with local and national LGBTQ+ campaigns.



Stand Up Awareness Week Activities

Looking for inspiration? Read some of our activity ideas below or take a look at page 29 to see some of the wonderful actions undertaken by schools, youth services and Youthreach centres across Ireland last year!

Rainbow Walkway

Across Ireland, lots of towns and cities have painted wonderful rainbow walkways to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. These walkways are a sign that LGBTQ+ people are respected and celebrated in that community. Is there somewhere on your grounds or in your building where you could create your own rainbow walkway? Create the walkway with paint or chalk at your entrance gate, or decorate a corridor, hall or front door with rainbow colours to show that your school, Youthreach centre or youth service is LGBTQ+ inclusive.

Launch Your LGBTQ+ And Allies Club

Stand Up Awareness Week is the perfect time to launch your GSA or LGBTQ+ and Allies Club, or to let young people know about your plans to set one up. Hosting a school assembly where staff and young people talk about the club, what you do, and how to join is a great way to spread the word to those who might feel nervous about asking for this information themselves.

Already have a GSA or LGBTQ+ and Allies Club set up? Stand Up Awareness Week is the perfect time to share all of your wonderful work so far with staff and young people! Learn more about setting up a GSA or LGBTQ+ and Allies Club on pages 30-31 in this guide.

Connect To The Curriculum

Including LGBTQ+ identities and experiences in the curriculum is a great way to sustain LGBTQ+ inclusion year-round. Young people's work on LGBTQ+ themes can be displayed in your library, hall or entrance. Our Junior Cycle curriculum resources suggest ways to make a range of subjects, such as Science, Maths, History and Geography, LGBTQ+ inclusive. You can view these resources on our **online education hub**.



Host A Lunchtime LGBTQ+ Film

Belong To is delighted to once again partner with the Irish Film Institute (IFI), Dublin to offer a limited number of free, online screenings of a select LGBTQ+ film for participating schools. Check our page www.belongto.org/standup in November to access the film for and schedule a viewing into your Stand Up Awareness Week plans.



Raise Funds

Through our frontline supports, youth groups, training and advocacy Belong To works to create an Ireland where all LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe and thriving. There are lots of ways to support our work during Stand Up Awareness Week, such as asking students to contribute €2 for Rainbow Jumper Day on Friday, November 10, holding a rainbow raffle, or running an LGBTQ+ themed bake sale. For a fundraising pack, contact Chris (he/him) from our Fundraising Team: fundraising@belongto.org / 01 670 6223.



Pride Noticeboard

Choose a dedicated noticeboard, whiteboard or wall to display messages of LGBTQ+ inclusivity year-round. This can include details of your local LGBTQ+ youth group, contact details for LGBTQ+ support services such as Belong To, and the names of staff members leading on wellbeing, guidance and LGBTQ+ inclusivity. During Stand Up Awareness Week, invite allies to sign their name on the Pride noticeboard or to leave messages of support and solidarity for the LGBTQ+ community.

Read The Rainbow

Stand Up Awareness Week is a great time to launch a new or updated LGBTQ+ section in your school, Youthreach centre or youth service's library. As part of the Seven Steps to Stand Up, 'Step 4: Time to Plan' could include young people suggesting LGBTQ+ novels they have enjoyed or would like to read. The 'Rainbow Reads' list, put together by Children's Books Ireland and An Post, is another great place for inspiration. The list categorises a wide range of LGBTQ+ books by age group, and is available at our **online education hub**.



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“ Who wouldn't want to be a teacher during Stand Up Awareness Week? A time when students and staff join together to show solidarity and bring fun, joy and inclusion to the forefront of learning.”

— Lauren Comer, Mercy College Coolock, Dublin



Belong To LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland

Belong To is a national organisation supporting LGBTQ+ youth.

Since 2003, we have worked with LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland offering safety and support through our services. Let your students and youth groups know about Belong To and what supports are available for them including LGBTQ+ youth groups, crisis counselling with Pieta and digital support services.

For educators, we offer online training, support and initiatives such as the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark. For youth workers, we support a National Network of LGBTQ+ youth groups and run the Rainbow Award – an action-focused accreditation programme that supports a whole-organisation approach to safe and supportive services for LGBTQ+ youth.

Learn more at www.belongto.org



JOIN THE LGBTQ+ QUALITY MARK MOVEMENT

Would you like to join 57 schools on a journey of inclusion? Sign up for our evidence-based LGBTQ+ Quality Mark designed to support and accredit LGBTQ+ Safe and Supportive Schools.



Duration: 18 months **Cost:** €845

Who is it for? Post-primary Schools and Youthreach Centres

Resources and Supports

- **Membership of our National Network of LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools**
Learn and share ideas, opportunities and best practice.
- **LGBTQ+ Support Team Training**
Specialised training for the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Coordination Team.
- **All Staff Training**
Empower your team to feel confident supporting LGBTQ+ youth.
- **Youth Group Training**
Support and empowerment of your student council, diversity group or LGBTQ+ support group.
- **One to One Supports**
Dedicated support by phone, email and Zoom.
- **Resources**
Best practice guidance, toolkits, activity ideas, templates, posters and presentation.

Find Out More

Contact the Belong To Training and Education Team today:

Call Stephen Cassidy on **01 5826152** or email **stephen@belongto.org**



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